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21.—*Poems.* By JEAN INGELOW. Boston: Roberts Brothers. 1863 pp. 256.

"JEAN INGELOW" has such a very odd look that one feels inclined, at first, to believe it a pseudonyme. It sounds very much like one of those names which a young author might choose for his heroine after the fashion that came in with "*Jane Eyre*," plain but not vulgar, musical in an unpretending way, and attractive by a spice of oddity to ears somewhat palled by the high-sounding titles that were once the mode. A doubt about the name might lead us to suspect that the sex also was a device. If these poems are written by a woman, they are remarkable for a certain firmness of thought and style; if by a man, for sweetness and delicacy of sentiment. This is already saying a great deal in their praise. Assuming them to be the first productions of a young woman, they are full of promise, for they have a simplicity that is very uncommon in female verse-writing. It is rather singular that women, who write letters with so much ease and grace as to have almost a monopoly of writing them well, are apt to seek originality in poetry in quaintness of phrase and overstraining of sentiment. They seem to mistake vehemence for force, and become harsh in endeavoring to escape the control of that refinement of organization which gives to their intellect its most charming quality. Mrs. Browning, in some of her later poems, was as rugged and obscure as the elder Edda, and Miss Rossetti seems to us in danger of throwing away a really fine imagination by choosing to be whimsical when she might be original. There is no falser axiom than that which denies sex to mind.

The poems of Miss Ingelow, like those of all young writers, show traces of the influence of the prevailing school. There are tricks of verse and turns of phrase which she has caught of Tennyson and Charles Kingsley, and there is too much of that landscape-painting which applies the principles of Pre-Raphaelitism to poetry, where they are out of place, and gives all the particulars that can be found by an eye at leisure instead of the few essential features into which a scene is generalized by a mind under strong emotion. Miss Ingelow, as young poets are wont, strives to say all that *can* be said, rather than to leave out all but what *must* be said. But making all the allowances which an honest criticism should, there is quite enough in her volume to give her a place among the better poets of the day. There is a genuine originality in her choice of subjects and her conception of situations and motives. She has a true eye for what is lovely and touching, both in the outward world and the inward one of the emotions, and a fine instinct of the way in which each reproduces itself in the other, giving

or taking, as the case may be, the hue of its own sentiment. Some of her lyrics have the highest charm of feeling and measure; fresh and full of unexpected turns, they have the freedom and simplicity, the delightful *nonchalance*, of nursery rhymes, but such as are sung only by the Muse over the cradles of her favorites. They have that exhilarating want of purpose, that singing for mere singing's sake, that seemed to be lost since the day of the Old Dramatists. Miss Ingelow raises high expectations, which we have no doubt her maturer powers will fully justify.

22. — *Poems in the Dorset Dialect.* By WILLIAM BARNES. Boston : Crosby and Nichols. 1864. 12mo. pp. viii. and 207.

WE need do no more than announce the republication of this volume, for it comes to us with its reputation already made. Mr. Barnes is not a peasant writing in his native *patois*, but a scholar who has made himself perfect master of a dialect, for such the language of Dorsetshire almost deserves to be called; not quite in the same sense as Lowland Scotch, the French of Jasmin, the German of Hebel, or the Italian of Meli, but still a dialect in its retention of archaic forms and words peculiar to itself. These poems, laying no claim to any very high imaginative power, have the merit, almost as rare, of nature and simplicity. Mr. Barnes, with a true sense of his own strong point, called a former volume "Homely Rhymes." But his verse is homely only in the best sense, that it deals with household sentiment and the mirth or sadness of the fireside. He writes, like Robert de Brunne,

"For the luf of symple men,
That strange English can not ken,
For tho that on this land wonn
That the Latyn ne Frankys conn."

People that are reasonably tired of metaphysics in rhyme, who have tastes not yet so dulled that they need to have even passion red-peppered for them, will find real solace and refreshment in these poems. In subject and treatment, they are sweet, kindly, and rural. Nor is the dialect such as to make them hard reading. There is hardly a stanza in the volume which cannot be made English by a change of spelling, a curious illustration of what we said before, — that Mr. Barnes writes in a language which he has acquired, and not to which he was born. This fact, however, as the tongue is neither foreign nor dead, does not in the least detract from the perfectly easy naturalness of the poems.